



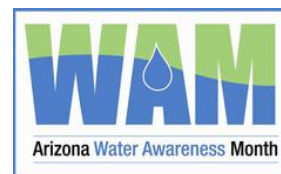
**APRIL TIP SAVINGS: Up to \$1,000/YR**  
**Avoided Emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>: Up to 4,000 lbs./YR**

# \$USTAINABILITY \$AVINGS TIP

## **BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY**

**CELEBRATE NATURE: Earth Day, Arbor Day, Water Awareness Month & More!**

Some call it Earth Month! Perhaps due to renewal of life that springs forth from the cold of a harsh winter, or maybe it's because April is also the time when most flowering plants bloom, and this powerful act of nature symbolizes the revival of life. Celebrations of nature abound during the month of April: Earth Day is April 22<sup>nd</sup>, Arbor Day is April 25<sup>th</sup> and Water Awareness Month takes place during the entire month. See how you can get involved in all of these events below, but we're also including ten simple actions to make a positive impact on the planet:



### **1. Learn what to do and share what you learn**

We all want to do the right thing and with this major green shift that's going on, there's a lot to learn. Once you learn something, pass it on. Get creative with your family, neighbors, schools or workplace, and share how to recycle, plant a tree for shade or weatherize your home.

### **2. Rethink the way you think**

What's your excuse for not being sustainable? We all use them. "Taking the light rail takes too much time." "I left my canvas shopping bag in the car." Sometimes being sustainable takes more time and takes more thought. Be creative. Get some work done while you are on the light rail. Tape a reminder on your dashboard to grab your canvas shopping bag. Keep recycling bins in handy locations for success. Slow down and drive smarter for better gas mileage.



### **3. Build or renovate smarter**

According to the Department of Energy, buildings account for 39% of the total energy use, 68% of total electricity use, 16% of total water use, and they contribute 38% of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions or greenhouse gasses. What great reasons to implement green building techniques during construction or a renovation. Also, look for the Energy Star and WaterSense label when purchasing household appliances or fixtures. Some items may cost more initially, but will pay off monthly in water and energy savings.

### **4. Think permeable paving**

This may sound like an odd tip, but it can make a tremendous difference to our urban environment. Urban areas are blanketed with rooftops, streets, sidewalks and driveways that whisk any rainfall into streets and storm drains. Permeable paving allows precipitation to percolate into the soil below. The benefits include less erosion, flooding and heat buildup, better water quality and groundwater recharge.

### **5. Read the labels**

Some chemicals in household products can harm people, animals and plants. They may pollute the air, water or soil. From personal care products to lawn and garden goods, be careful what you purchase, bring into your home, or use in your garden and landscape. Educate yourself and look for the active ingredient on the label. Alternative cleaning products can be made from simple household items like vinegar or baking soda. Safer cleaning options are also available at many retailers.



*Learn to live Green*

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## 6. Save water and energy

There are so many easy ways to save water and energy. But don't forget the close link between the two. It takes water to generate energy, and it takes energy to process and deliver water. So when you save one, you're saving the other, too. Wash dishes and laundry with full loads, unplug charging stations or purchase smart power strips. Rebates or incentives are still available for upgrades to efficient products.

## 7. Reduce your food miles

Food miles are the distance your food travels from the grower to your plate. The more food miles, the more fuel used, and the more CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The benefits are that you'll be eating healthier and fresher foods and supporting your local growers.

## 8. Choose your fuel

Cheap fuel is a thing of the past and our current transportation systems are significant energy users and contributors to greenhouse gas emissions. What's an auto-holic, urban dweller to do? While challenging, it's still possible to find jobs close to where you live. Carpool or check out your alternate transportation options and let someone else do the driving. If you can, purchase a hybrid, an electric or other fuel-efficient vehicle. Don't forget bicycling and walking and you'll get your exercise, too.

## 9. Support a cause

Whether you decide to support a local charity or one that acts nationally or globally, we have just one planet to share. Extra support to improve our environment can make a world of difference.

## 10. Connect with your elected officials

Elected officials need to know the concerns of their community and they like to be informed and appreciated by their constituents – so they often will listen to them. Don't be intimidated to share your thoughts on environmental or sustainability issues. Be brief, clear, and provide specific ideas, demonstrate respect and courtesy, and provide them with an opportunity to get more information if necessary.



## CELEBRATE NATURE WITH THESE ACTIVITIES

- ☐ **Earth Day, April 22:** Focuses our attention on the importance of protecting the environment.
- ☐ **Arbor Day, April 25:** Setting aside a special day for tree planting and tree care.
- ☐ **Water Awareness Month:** Raising awareness about the importance of water conservation.
- ☐ **National Mayor's Challenge for Water Conservation, April:** Save water and win a Prius with this simple challenge to save water.
- ☐ **Celebrate Arizona Water Photo Contest, through May 31:** Submit photos celebrating Arizona's natural water to Water – Use It Wisely for a chance to win a houseboat vacation on Lake Powell.
- ☐ **Visit our sustainability website** to learn more about rebates and incentives, water conservation and recycling details, and all events mentioned above.

## \$START \$AVING

Start saving on your utility bills, on gasoline, improve your health and more, and do your part for *building a sustainable community*. Visit our Web site for more sustainability savings tips at [www.mesaaz.gov/sustainability](http://www.mesaaz.gov/sustainability).

*Learn to live Green*